


USING MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE TO PROMOTE CULTURAL
AWARENESS AND DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR OWN:
A YUP'IK TEACHER RESEARCHER'S JOURNEY

By

Nuraraq Joanne T. Sundown

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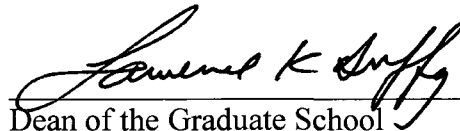
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Chair, Linguistics Program

APPROVED:

Dean, College of Liberal Arts



Dean of the Graduate School

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USING MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE TO PROMOTE CULTURAL
AWARENESS AND DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR OWN: A YUP'IK
TEACHER-RESEARCHER'S JOURNEY
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Nuraraq Joanne T. Sundown, B. Ed.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to see if using multicultural literature potentially enhances a student's own respect of his/her culture and language. Through the use of a multicultural thematic unit and multicultural literature, students can potentially gain awareness and respect for diverse populations. This research hopes to see this diverse awareness and respect reflected in respect for the students' own culture and language. The research conducted was a qualitative study employing teacher action research methodology. The participants were nine second grade students. Data included interviews, observations, and student artifacts, which consisted primarily of the *Make Connections Organizer*. Findings suggest that students make more personal connections when reading multicultural literature that contains narratives or topics similar to their own culture. Findings also suggest that using literature about Indigenous and Alaska Native topics, events and characters can potentially contribute to students' deeper understandings of their own culture and that of others.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

“I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents, and strengths, of my family, tribe, and ancestors” ~ Maori Approaches to Assessment

Introduction

Wiinga, Me; The researcher:

Wiinga Kenegnaq Nuraraugua. Angayukarka Can'aarauguk Arnaucuar-llu Marayarmiungulutek. Nuraraq Asacaryarmiungulluk. Wangnek-llu Kenegnarmek acillruunga assikngamku. Anglillunga Marayarmi, maani-llu Fairbanks-ami Bachelor of Education- amnek taqutellrulua. Maai-llu qetunrangellua ataucimek maani yurtellruluni,. Atri amlertut; Can'aarauguq, atama atranek, cali-llu Cuulungalegmek, atapiin apauluan atra, cali-llu Mamangayak- aanama angaan qetunra Marayarmium atra.

I was born to and raised by the late Can'aar Teddy and Arnaucuar Mary Ann Sundown of Scammon Bay, Alaska. My Yup'ik name Nuraraq is that of a great uncle of Mountain Village, Alaska, I also named myself Kenegnaq because I liked it. I was raised in Scammon Bay, and earned my Bachelor of Education through the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I have a son who was born in Fairbanks. He is named after several relatives. Can'aar is one of my son's Yup'ik names, which is the name of my late father Teddy Sundown. Culunglek is another of my son's Yup'ik names, which is his father's uncle. The another of my son's Yup'ik names is Mamangayak which comes from my mother's older brother's son. Raised Yup'ik, in the village, I follow in the footsteps of

my older brother and sisters in education. I was always interested in culture and languages with a strong foundation in the Yup'ik language and culture. This focus and passion carried and earned me an education degree with a minor in Yup'ik. I strongly believe each being has something to share and “bring forth the gifts, talents, and strengths of their family, tribe and ancestors” (Rameka, 2007, p.9). I am here to explore and research how students view their culture and language as it pertains to their families, tribe, and ancestral upbringing.

Through this research, I seek to convey the connections students make as a result of engaging in multicultural literature through organized and multimodal activities (written, oral, visual) of a thematic unit. I developed and implemented a thematic unit on diversity, which prompts the participants to reflect on their own culture and language. This research focuses on how the students reflect on the information in the books and what personal connections they make.

As an elementary teacher who has taught reading for 14 years, I often wondered why the basal readers, texts, and other reading related material were so uninteresting and unmotivating to readers like my students and I. Even the newest texts, which cost my district and school a lot of money, seemed ineffective and unengaging to the readers. I began to reflect on my earliest memories, my own experiences with literacy, and how I acquired my Yup'ik and English languages. It dawned on me that though I was not read to at home as a child, I was provided a much more meaningful, engaging, and personal connection to literacy, which was hearing stories told by my parents. I was deeply rooted

in this rich language, culture, and history of my Yup'ik heritage through *Yuraq* (Yup'ik Dance), song, and *qulirat* and *qanemcit* (traditional stories). Even if I did not participate in these cultural literacies, they surrounded me in my upbringing, which I feel reinforced my identity. It was not until three years ago that I began to organize and devise a plan to use multicultural literature through a yearlong thematic unit, which at that time was missing in my teaching. One reason I wanted to fill this gap was that I feel it is vital to respect diversity, and that this respect for others can be the key to opening lines of communication between all students. Furthermore, what was missing was the knowledge and awareness of other world cultures. To achieve this I wanted to be able to enhance my students' array of information by providing them opportunities to become aware of other cultures and languages. Seale and Slapin (2005) encourage readers to question the authenticity and accuracy of books and other material through their examination and evaluation of many books. It was enlightening and eye opening to read some of their book reviews to some of the well-known books such as *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Little did I know about the missing details such as "killing, burnings, beatings, horse thefts, and grave robberies-committed by white settlers, such as Charles Ingalls, against Osages..."(p. 49). So texts by Laura Ingalls Wilder are not authentic. To be a proficient reader, students must be able to make relevant connections and to question as they read. This was missing in my teaching. The multicultural thematic unit that I created was, therefore, relevant to my philosophy of language learning, and philosophy of education.

The students in this study live in a remote Yup'ik village. They are disconnected from the larger culture in the US and many might think also from other world cultures. Some people might argue that it does not matter to these children to learn about other cultures, but I argue is that it is especially important for these children to learn about different cultures, because they too are different from the dominant culture of the US. I am hoping that in seeing different cultures, they can appreciate that they are different. Perhaps the children do not need to feel so compelled to “fit in”, but rather to celebrate their own language and culture. This is why I am reading various books about different cultures with these second grade students.

Three years have passed since I began using the thematic unit on diversity using multicultural literature. Prior to this program and this research, I took a literature class with a visiting professor here at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It had come to my attention that statistics showed that students, who read, chose to read more fiction and less non-fiction books. I took another class on how to create and incorporate thematic units in the classroom; I completed a thematic unit as my project. As a result of my personal epiphany and the two classes I took, I developed my own thematic unit, which is represented here in this research.

This research is teacher action research. The setting and participants are my native home and my native culture. I utilized the constant comparative method (Goets and LeCompte ,1981) in order analyze to the interviews (recorded and transcribed), researcher journal, and the student artifacts. The main data source is the *Make*

Connections Organizer, which is a graphic organizer the students used to document the personal connections they made to the stories they read.

In conducting the literature review, three main themes emerge. The first theme is *multicultural education* (which fits this research because I needed to meet the diverse learners with relevant text). The second theme is *multicultural literature*, which fits this research because I needed to expose the participants to authentic and relevant material. The third theme is *multiliteracies*. This is important to meet needs of the modern learners who need to be motivated and engaged through multimodalities.

Rationale/Purpose

The purpose of this research is to see if using multicultural literature enhances a students' respect of their culture and language. This researcher hoped to see this diverse awareness and respect reflected on the individual students' own culture and language. The personal interest of this study involved the researcher's own love for diversity and drive for cultural plurism. For me, the exploration of different cultures and languages creates an appreciation of my own Yup'ik culture and language. I want this experience of using multicultural literature to also allow my students to appreciate their own culture and language.

Another goal of this research is to share my teaching ideas and findings with other teachers, especially those in rural villages. I would like to share how the use of thematic units and multicultural literature involves the students and their responses to the connections they may make to stories they read. As part of the philosophical nature of

this thematic unit, one objective remains true, to expose participants to multicultural literature so that they become global citizens.

Research Question

My research question is:

How will the use of multicultural literature contribute to students' awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages?

This research question seeks to explore the possible outcomes based on participant journals, interview (recorded and written), and data from the researcher journal. I seek to answer this question through analyzing the writing, drawing, and personal connections of the participants.

Through this research I wanted to explore how the participants make personal connections to the studying and reading about other cultures and languages other than their own. I answered this research question through the *Make Connections Organizer* that prompted participants to make personal connections through writing and drawings.

Limitations

This study addresses outcomes in participant writing, drawing, and personal connections to what they were reading and exploring. This qualitative study was carried out in a specific context. I was working with my own students in my own community. As a teacher action researcher I was primarily interested in understanding and improving my own teaching. However, other teachers in Alaska and beyond might recognize

themselves as their own students in my findings. They might be able to adapt my findings to their own context.

Definitions

Authenticity - credible and faithful representation of the culture the literature is about.

(Seale & Slapin, 2005)

Accuracy - the preciseness and the definitiveness of the culture the literature is about

(Seale & Slapin, 2005)

Constant comparative method - how a researcher reviews data obtained to seek new

avenues in regards to the research, this is a form of analysis to examine what

needs to be addressed still, or assesses what works and what does not work

(Goets and LeCompte, 1981).

Cross-Cultural Literature - type of multicultural literature that is written by outside

authors or authors about a culture that is not same as his/her own

a) Literature that shows interrelations among people of different cultures. (More reference type literature)

b) Books about a culture group written by a write from another cultural group or outside author (more story line literature) (Cai & Bishop, 1994)

Culture - the values, beliefs, traditions, and worldviews of a group of people who are

bound together by physical location, common language, history, socioeconomic

class, or religion (Webster, 2002).

Literacies -In a narrow definition Literacies are reading, writing, reflecting. Literacies

help us make sense of our world and do something about it. This concept has

recently been broadened to include additional forms of literacies. (See Multiliteracies)

Multicultural education - policies, programs, and practices employed in the schools to celebrate cultural diversity or challenges and reject racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society. Accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. A goal is to provide students with the skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to help them function as productive members of society (Banks, 2005).

Multicultural literature - literature that reflects the experiences, values, and beliefs of a particular culture of people, including European cultures as well as minority cultures and picture book, regardless of genre, that has a main character that is a person or member of a racial, religious, or language micro culture other than the dominant Euro-American one, and books that reflect the racial, ethnic, and social diversity that is characteristic of our pluralistic society and of the world (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002).

Multimodalities - different forms of text and literacies that help people make meaning (Healy, 2008)

Multiliteracies - multiple types of literacies; functional (languages of the streets and of life); academic (languages of schools and universities); workplace (languages of our jobs); information (languages of technology); constructive (languages we construct with the printed word); emergent (languages that reflects the

perspective of one culture); and critical (languages that take us deeper into more complex understandings of the word and the world); and finally literacies as a new type of literacy that provides a foundation reflective of multiple experiences (Wink, 2002)

Parallel Culture Literature - types of multicultural literature written by native or authors of color. This is an insider perspective. (Cai & Bishop, 1994)

Teacher action research - a teacher who is a researcher who has chosen his/her context (classroom and/participants) to explore through varying action methods such as jigsaws and recordings (Baumann & Duffy, 2001)

Thematic unit - curricula used in schools that are directed around a central theme, can be written per week, month, or yearlong. An example thematic unit can be on animals, dinosaurs, or oceans and usually cover topics across subjects in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, etc.

World Literature - type of multicultural literature that includes folktales, fiction, and the like from non-Western countries or other underrepresented groups outside the United States (Cai & Bishop, 1994)

Summary

The themes that were just briefly covered in this introduction will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two. My literature review explores the themes of multicultural education, multicultural literature, and multiliteracies. Various research is discussed within each of the themes. I will explain how they inform my thesis. I am paying special attention to the how my research addresses existing gaps in the literature.

Chapter three is the methodology chapter that outlines how I conducted this research. This chapter accounts for the setting, participants, methodology and theoretical framework. This research is teacher action research (setting and participants are her native home and her own people). Using the constant comparative method I primarily analyzed students' *Make Connections Organizer* to discover students' personal and cultural connections.

Chapter four is the analysis in which I address my research question by drawing on the data I collected. Data include tables summarizing the numbers of personal connections students made, Yup'ik themes that emerged, and how I rated the multicultural literature used in this research. As part of the analysis I also present four participant profiles.

Chapter five presents my implications I reflect on my research in terms of what I have learned about multicultural literature. I also provide guidance to other teachers/researchers and share some things I would do differently.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

“There are only two lasting bequests that we can leave our children; One is roots; the other; wings.” ~ Unknown

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to relate this study to literature and resources that define, exemplify and connect the themes of multicultural education, multicultural literature, and multiliteracies. I will portray the themes and connect them to my research focusing on multicultural literature in a second grade classroom in rural Alaska.

Multicultural Education

The first topic is the concept of multicultural education (ME) and its direct focus of teaching diverse students. In this section I will share definitions of Multicultural Education, and discuss the rationale for and goals of Multicultural Education. I also state the links between Multicultural Education and my own teaching and research.

Definitions of Multicultural Education

Banks (2005), states that Multicultural Education is a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students.

First I mean that multicultural education should help students to develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills to participate in a democratic and free society. Secondly, multicultural education promotes the freedom, abilities, and skills to

cross ethnic and cultural boundaries to participate in other cultures and groups.
(p.81)

I wanted my students to become familiar with other ethnic groups and for them to be able to begin to understand differences and commonalities between other cultures and languages and their own. Bennet (2003) defines Multicultural Education as an approach to teaching and learning that is based on democratic values and beliefs and that affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an independent world (p.14).

This definition of multicultural education coincides with my knowledge, background, and lived experience being a native woman of Alaska and needing my perspective, race, voice, ideas, and customs and traditions to be respected. In all the years I have taught prior to my using a multicultural thematic unit, I felt that the learners' views, identity, and background were absent in the educational process. Thematic units are a set of lessons that are all centered on a common theme. Thematic units can be written per week, month, or year. For example, thematic units can be on animals, dinosaurs, or oceans and usually cover topics across subjects in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. When I developed the thematic unit on continents and countries, I mainly used multicultural literature. In reflecting to previous years of teaching without this multicultural thematic unit, my students' prior knowledge, rich culture and language, and values were not taken into account. I felt that personal connections to the literature were also absent. I wanted to use multicultural education to

add what was missing. Campbell (2000) shares his definition for Multicultural Education, stating that it

...is at least three things: idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and process. Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students-regardless of their gender and social class, and their ethnic, racial, and cultural characteristics-should have an equal opportunity to learn in school. (p.33)

ME is a concept that seeks to meet the needs of diverse students. The process of ME began as a reform to the regular education. One way that I use to encourage the process is through the use of a thematic unit on continents and oceans through the use of Multicultural Literature.

Free and open communication, respect for diversity, and being versatile in an ever-changing world were some of my reasons for creating the thematic unit. These skills seemed distant or to some degree absent for minorities, such as the students in my class. In doing this research, I want to see how my second grade students express their ideas, how they relate to others, and how that makes them feel about their identity. More importantly, it is important for my students to see that they are a part of, and have a special place, in the larger world.

Why Multicultural Education

The main reason I chose to use ME as the basis of my teaching and research is to show the importance of culture and language and connections students may make in their reading. ME is a movement that began as a result to reform schools began in the

1960s when research was showing that public schools were not meeting the needs for all children. They were not creating opportunities for democratic societies for all students. According to Campbell (2000) “a fundamental purpose of schools is to prepare future citizens to be stakeholders in society” (p. 29). Campbell also stated that the successful students in schooling were the middle-class students and suggested reform for the poor. It is important as a teacher to prepare students to become productive members of society and to facilitate their way into becoming decision makers and leaders of their community. I strive to expose the students to the various cultures and languages because I want them to be prepared to meet the modern day challenges of a diverse world. Some challenges may include linguistics, how to communicate with others who may speak a different language than they do, to show respect for cultures other than their own, and to embrace their own uniqueness as Yup’ik people.

Goals of Multicultural Education

It is important to outline some of the central goals of Multicultural Education. The overall concept as stated by Banks (1994) is “its primary goal-in the broadest sense-is an ‘education for freedom’” (p.4). He furthers that Multicultural Education

- helps students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to participate in a democratic and free society
- promotes the freedom, abilities, and skills to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries to participate in other cultures and groups
- is for all students

C.M. Banks (2005) states her goal of Multicultural Education is to rectify cross-cultural race relations by providing students with knowledge, attitude, and skill for interactions.

Because Scammon Bay is a small village and most people living here are Yup'ik, I want to build awareness within the students I teach. These students need to have an awareness of their environment and their world, which embraces the various cultures and languages, and an awareness that embraces their own unique identity. The students in Scammon Bay are isolated in a village primarily made up of Yup'ik people. Thus, it was vital for me to create my thematic unit, and further this research based on the premises and goals of Multicultural Education. One way to accomplish this was through studying other cultures using multicultural literature.

Multicultural Literature

The second theme is the use of multicultural literature and its effects on identity. In this section I will review the literature in this field that helped me understand the use of multicultural literature and how my students connected it to their lives. Some subheadings for my Literature review include definitions of multicultural literature, authenticity and accuracy of multicultural literature, benefits of using multicultural literature, and need for multicultural literature.

Definitions of Multicultural Literature

First I will share definitions of ML, second I will focus on the importance of authenticity and accuracy of ML, third I will highlight the benefits of ML, and fourth I will share the needs of ML.

Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002) define multicultural literature (ML) as books, which involve encounters, values, and beliefs of various cultures. The authors further this definition in stating that multicultural literature is a representation of new authors, particularly authors of color, who are sharing their own stories and perspectives. Through their themes they provide authenticity in areas of identity, and insight on their cultural heritage (p. 166). One of the main reasons why I decided to use multicultural literature within this study is to provide opportunities for my students to make personal connections as they read about various other cultures as well as their own. There is a sense of isolation in my village, especially during the school year when the weather is harsh and unforgiving. For a lot of children in Scammon Bay and other remote locations, school is the only social arena. Students interact with the non-native teachers who teach here (primarily white) and with each other. Their interaction and experience with other cultures is largely limited to television and/or the Internet. Au (1993) refers to Violet Harris' definition of multicultural literature as literature that focuses on people of color (such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans), on religious minorities (such as the Amish or Jewish), on regional cultures (such as the Appalachian and Cajun), on the disabled, and on the aged. I want my students to know that authors come from different cultures and backgrounds; it is not only non-natives that can write literature.

For me, the concept of place is another important feature of multicultural literature. Children can develop a sense of place (geography), and how the places they have read about relate to their own experiences, their own location. In other words, they

explore what locations say about who they are. This research seeks to illustrate what links the students discover between the new environments they are reading about, and their own surroundings. For that reason, I chose to organize my thematic unit on diversity based on continents and oceans. It is important for the students to know that the United States is only one country in the world, and the world is full of many different countries, cultures, and languages. Webster (2002) stated this need best in her book *Teaching Through Culture*, “given that the study of literature implies the study of culture, is the recognition that we need texts that present other than the dominant culture in our schools’ curricula” (p. vii). Yup’ik is the ancestral culture of most of the students in Scammon Bay. However, the influence of the dominant white culture is present in the village. This research aspires to see what happens when Yup’ik and various other cultures are represented vividly, truthfully, and with as much importance and significance as the representation as the dominant cultures.

Authenticity and Accuracy in Multicultural Literature

Cai and Bishop (1994) suggested a clarification to the broad concept of multicultural literature (ML) by including at least three kind of literature: world literature, cross-cultural literature, and “minority” literature or literature from a parallel cultures (p. 62). World literature is broken up into the categories “folktales, fiction, and the like from non-Western countries or other underrepresented groups outside the United States, generally peoples from the Southern or Eastern Hemisphere” (p. 62). Cai and Bishop give an example of ML that would qualify as world literature, which is *The Boy of the Three Year Nap* by Snyder (1988). The next category of ML is a cross-cultural

literature. This means ML as written by an outsider perspective, or written by authors who are not from the culture they seek to portray in their writing. Cai and Bishop give an example of ML that would qualify as cross-cultural literature, which is *How My Parents Learned to Eat* by Friedman. This is about an American sailor who meets a Japanese lady. In the book they learned about each other through their cultural differences such as eating with forks or chopsticks. The last category of ML, which, Cai and Bishop propose, is parallel culture literature. These types of ML are books written by native authors or authors of color. This is an insider perspective. Cai and Bishop stress that literature from parallel cultural groups has a unique role to play in multicultural literature programs, because writers from those groups best represent their own cultures”(p.68). The parallel culture perspective is encouraged to use especially because of the authenticity and accuracy of the ML. Authenticity and accuracy should be at the forefront when using multicultural literature. Authenticity refers to a credible and faithful representation of the culture. Accuracy refers to the preciseness and the definitiveness of the culture the literature is about (Seale & Slapin, 2005). *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in book for Children* by authors Seale and Slapin, is a comprehensive resource that covers a wide range of Native American literary. The use of accurate and authentic multicultural literature is key to creating personal connections. All students should feel that their backgrounds are well represented in text, and should feel respected among their peers.

I use the book *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in book for Children* by authors Seale and Slapin as a reference and guide when I rated multicultural literature

used in this research. See Chapter five of this research. Very often minority cultures are underrepresented or represented in negative ways, and this creates barriers for the children in terms of their learning, self-esteem, and self-image. Seale and Slapin (2005) further this idea by explaining “I write extensive author’s notes based on extensive research, to make sure that everything I write is accurate.” (p. 7). It is important that students make personal connections to authentic and accurate literature. For this research, I focused primarily on students’ personal connections to ML. In my analysis I used these concepts to explain why students may have made more connections to certain books and not others.

Au (1993) states that what is valuable for students are culturally conscious multiethnic literature. This means literature that is vigilant of culture it seeks to express. This means that the content authentic and accurate. Sims (1982) uses the term culturally conscious literature to mean literature that accurately reflects a group’s culture, language, history, and values. Webster (2002) describes how inaccuracy can have negative affects with her statement,

Students outside the dominant culture who see no images of themselves, or inaccurate portrayals of their culture in the literature that they read in school, can experience a devaluing of their cultural identities. This can result in a loss of self-esteem and empowerment that can seriously limit agency, which is key ingredient to learning. (p. ix)

While there is literature that does not meet the criteria of authenticity and accuracy, Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002), argue that, “Some very gifted authors, however,

have managed to use careful research, fact-checking, and even close observations and personal experience to get it right.” (p. 168). Under these conditions, ML can be effective in meeting the needs of a diverse group. Many beneficial results can occur as a result of fact checking, and research on various cultures.

Benefits in using Multicultural Literature

Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002) list the benefits of using multicultural literature in suggesting that multicultural texts furnish diverse perspectives, awareness and respect for diversity, and create critical thinkers. They extend this argument by quoting Bishop (1997), “Multicultural literature can have a beneficial effect on the school achievement of children who have historically been denied realistic images of themselves and their families, community, and culture”(p. 4). I wanted to instill the notion that students are unique and that their own culture and language is just as important as those around them. In my view a person has a place in the world, which is defined by his/her freedoms. Being able to accept and respect one’s self is a foundation that many people can easily build upon in terms of living in an ever-changing society. Dyson and Genishi (1994) stated that these voices are required to meet the goals of multicultural education, which is reflective of empowering open minds and to have perspective. A big part of my research is to make students aware of their geography and culture. I do this because I feel that knowing their geography and culture will help them respect various points of view and to see how they relate to those around them.

Delpit (1986) suggests a benefit of multicultural literature

That diversity of thought, language, and worldview in our classrooms cannot only provide an exciting educational setting, but can also prepare our children for the richness of living in an increasingly diverse national community. (p. 66)

This means that through multicultural literature, students are preparing to live in a diverse environment. The central idea in this literature review focuses on authenticity, and beneficial results through the use of multicultural literature. Therefore, when teachers gain awareness that multicultural literature may be used as a stimulus for creating classrooms where all students are valued, children can celebrate their own culture and explore the uniqueness of others (Colby & Lyon, 2004).

Need for Multicultural Literature

I emphasize the need for ML with regard to an evolving world. Conservative estimates suggest that African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American children presently comprise almost 30 percent of the school-age population, and 'minority' students represent a majority in all but two of our twenty-five largest cities. (Delpit, 1986). Because of these trends, we need to make major changes in the approaches we use in the regular classroom and throughout the school system as a whole (Au, 1993). Dyson and Genishi (1994) state that to meet the demands of the increasingly diverse population of students, empowering stories are required (p.6). They stress that this diversification will continue with the result that by the turn of the century 40% of children in American classrooms will be non-white children (p.66).

Cultural diversity also leads to linguistic diversity. Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002) state that over 7.5 million students in the U.S. come from families where English is not the only language spoken. English Language Learners (ELL) are increasing in schools now, and in some cases ELL's account for 25-60 percent of the whole school population. To further the need for Multicultural Literature, Webster (2002), stated that according to the 2000 Census, it is approximated that 16.2 percent of school age students are Latino, and three out of four come from linguistically varied backgrounds. (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Due to this shift in the dominant culture, which was reflective of Anglo/European groups, there is a demand for change in choice, new literature, and curricular material. Webster (2002) best states the need for Multicultural Literature as the requirement for text, which mirrors the cultures of the readers. This reflection encourages construction of meaning and relevancy to students' background and personal literacies. One way to accomplish this is through the use of multiliteracies.

Multiliteracies

In reflecting on the use of thematic units through the use of multicultural literature, a final theme surfaces. It was my objective to expose students to multicultural literature so that they could become global citizens. In reflecting on what modern society encompasses today, the various modes of communication among people, one will realize the need for using a variety of teaching techniques necessary to teach the modern day student. One way to do this is through multiliteracies. Multiliteracies are multimodal referring to the different forms of text and different ways of making meaning such as

singing, reading poetry aloud, and listening to stories read aloud. Dooley (2008) expressed that,

A tenet of multiliteracies approach is that literacy education must enable people to live literately in a world of deep difference, both within and across increasingly pluralistic states. In other words, instead of trying to school difference out of people, multiliteracies education entails schooling in diversity. (p. 104)

So to define literacy and what is viewed as text in this notion of literacy in the traditional sense is to say that a literacy is making meaning of printed text. Healy (2008) challenges this by describing how text and literacy have evolved to become multimodal. “Text are no longer restricted to print technology as multimodality stretches its wings; they rather morph themselves in ways that neither have a standard format nor are bound to genre as we have thought in the past”(p. 5). Thus multimodal refers to text evolving from just print to the various strands of communication such as oral, gestural (as in dance), and technological evolutions such as computer texts. Even in a village as remote as Scammon Bay, you will find people with cell phones, internet, iPods, and many with computers such as desktops in homes and laptops. In the book *Conceptual Framework* it states, “the concept of multiliteracies is predicated on the notion that literacy and literacy practices are always socially situated and ideologically formed (Gee, 1996; Luke, 2000; New London Group, 1996). As such, Gee (1996) states being citizens in today’s social, cultural, and economic worlds requires us to negotiate a variety of multimodal texts that

utilize a multiplicity of discourses-those bits of language that are used within a larger discourse (p.9). In the book *Literacy Counts: A Teacher's Guide to Developing Literacies for MCC* lists some of the examples of multiliteracies to be; oral storytelling, music, visual arts, dance, drama, media, such as film, television, the Internet, and mathematics. (p.9). In relation to this research, I wanted to see if students' connections involved Yup'ik. Through multicultural literature I wanted to see how my students' experiences relate to their Yup'ik identity. The students read ML and then filled out a *Make Connections Organizer* for each story. In their responses, students wrote and drew pictures to match their written responses. The pictures depicted their visual literacies. Harste (2003) extends this idea by stating literacy means different things to different people. He explains,

When coupled with the notion of multiple literacies, literacy can be thought of as a particular set of social practices that a particular set of people value. In order to change anyone's definition of literacy, the social practices that keep a particular (and often older) definition of literacy in place have to change (p. 8)

Perhaps the simplest way to describe literacies and multiliteracies (at least for me) is to share a quote from Wink (2002),

Now, we are coming to know multiple types of literacies; functional (languages of the streets and of life); academic (languages of schools and universities); workplace (languages of our jobs); information (languages

of technology; constructive (languages we construct with the printed word); emergent (languages that reflects the perspective of one culture-guess which one?); and critical (languages that take us deeper into more complex understandings of the word and the world); and finally literacies as a new type of literacy that provides a foundation reflective of multiple experiences. Literacies are reading, writing, reflecting. Through reading ML and writing about their connections students responded with multiple literacies. Literacies help us make sense of our world and do something about it (p 55)

Some of the literacies engaged in this research included reading ML, and making connections through writing and drawing.

Some research has shown how that we come to the academic setting with these multiliteracies embedded in our lives. For example, Gallego and Hollingsworth (1992) defined Multiple Literacies as interaction among community, school, and personal literacies. The participants in their research were the teacher collaboration team and their collected anecdotal records of their students. Some of the results show that the teacher's understanding of students' community literacies began with an understanding of their own literacies, building of a new literacy, prior to developing instructional projects which incorporated students' community literacies, apparent students and family motivation (especially in the school literacy change), and personal literacy in teachers became more collaborative, intuitive of their roles in the school, and self reflective. The

student literacy changes included more empowerment of the students, where they became more involved, accountable, and confident learners. Through this research, I hope to see that students become more reflective with their own Yup'ik culture and within members of a global community.

Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) conducted a qualitative study using observations, videotapes, and interviews. Their research on Funds of Knowledge relates to the use of multiliteracies because the teachers in the classroom take the students' background and literacies into account. Funds of Knowledge refer to the culture, language, and the experiences that students have from their lives. The first study included classroom students and the second study extended this first by including their families' homes via interviews and observations. The purpose of this study was to explore if the educational curricula could be enhanced when teachers learn about their students' everyday lives. (p. 6). Some of their findings include recognizing students abilities to code-switch between Spanish and English as a resource. They also realized that father and son use mathematics in installing a fountain in a back yard. They wanted to encourage that teachers to realize that they can be learners too. They argue the more teachers engage students in the topic matter, the more interest and motivation they will have. Another important point is, that each family and student come with these multiple literacies, their 'Funds of Knowledge'.

As a community member I share Funds of Knowledge with my students. As a Yup'ik person, I am able to see how students may or may not relate the readings to that of their own culture. Their responses to their readings interest me.

Conclusion

My literature review has explored literature and resources that define, exemplify and connect the themes of multicultural education, multicultural literature, and multiliteracies. I have portrayed the themes and have connected them to my research with an emphasis on multicultural literature. Multicultural literature should be viewed here an integral tool needed in today's society and modern education. Schooling should meet the demands of an evolving society with considerations of multiliteracies in the forefront. To be able to teach in a modern world, globalization and pluralism should be viewed as educational goals, or perhaps viewed as wings that may aide students to become respective members in the future.

Chapter 3: Methodology

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”

~ Zora Neale Hurston

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the methodology of my research. This includes the study design, research question, purpose and goals, setting, participants, lessons, and data analysis techniques.

Study Design

The research design of this inquiry is qualitative. Mackey and Gass (2005) define qualitative research as “research that is based on descriptive data that does not make (regular) use of statistical procedures”(p. 162). The reason a qualitative research design is appropriate to the research question is as Mackey and Gass (2005) outline, “commonly used methods for gathering qualitative data include case studies, ethnographies, interviews, observational techniques, verbal protocols and diaries/journals (p. 162). The procedures outlined are those of a teacher action researcher. Baumann and Duffy (2001) characterize a teacher action researcher as a thoughtful classroom teacher that identifies a teaching problem or question and chooses to create a classroom study. With the aide of theoretical and applied educational literature, as well as teacher-research reports, the teacher action researcher decides to carry a study out. For the purpose of this study I included an interview, student artifacts

called *Make Connections Organizer*, and researcher journal. The teacher action researcher carries out a study with qualitative tools and other tools that focus on attaining the data needed to research the teaching problems. According to Mackey and Gass (2005) interviews are characterized as, “often associated with survey-based research, as well as being a technique used by many qualitative researchers”. Some types of interviews include structured, semi structures, and unstructured as outline by Mackey and Gass (p. 173). This research used semi -structured interviews. Mackey and Gass (2005) define this as using, “a list of written questions as a guide, while still having the freedom to digress and probe for more information” (p. 173). Observations according to Mackey and Gass (2005) “provide careful descriptions of learners’ activities without unduly influencing the events in which the learners are engaged”(p. 175). A tool used to make these observations was journals. Mackey and Gass (2005) define diaries/journals, language learning experiences and accounts documented by researchers and teachers that have no limitations compared to when answering specific questions (p. 177).

My research question

My research question: How will the use of multicultural literature contribute to students’ awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages? This research seeks to explore how the participants make personal connections with the literature. Through the use of a multicultural thematic unit and multicultural literature, I wanted to see how students connected to ML.

Purpose and Goals

My goals were twofold. First, I wanted the students to learn about other cultures and be able to compare (or make personal connections to) aspects of these cultures to their Yup'ik culture. Second, as we began to learn other cultures and their languages, another goal was for them to begin to use or speak more Yup'ik words (example: Namaste is hello in Hindi, we say Waqaa). From a teacher action research perspective, I was looking at how the participants made connections to other cultures and languages as the year progressed. It was very important to me that the participants reflect and make personal connection to other cultures and languages.

Setting

The name of my village is Scammon Bay. Local elders founded the village for subsistence purposes due to its mountainous land, fresh water stream, river, and ocean access. The village is isolated in the sense that the only transportation in and out of the village is by planes or barges carrying freight in the summers. Scammon Bay or *Marayaq* (Yup'ik name) as it is called, is primarily Yup'ik Eskimo. Subsistence hunting and fishing are still maintained throughout the year. Scammon Bay also relies on a cash economy with one local native store called Scammon Bay Association, and several privately owned grocery/rental stores. The Scammon Bay School opened in the 2006-2007 school year and the school enrollment is 180. The Lower Yukon School District has since adopted the quality school model that imitates a lot of the Chugach School District model. Within the quality schools model the key components include standardized teaching and assessments, this involves stake -holders, and student centered

and data driven instruction. This public, non-immersion school teaches Kindergarten through High School aged students and is one of eleven schools within the Lower Yukon School District. The school certified staff of seventeen includes fourteen certified teachers, one counselor, one special education teacher, and an instructional leader. Of the seventeen certified, seven are Alaskan Native, nine are Caucasian, and one is Philipino. I, the teacher researcher for this study, am Yup'ik. The setting is my second grade classroom. Enrolled in my class were fifteen students. But for this research only nine participated.

Participants

As previously stated I had fifteen students enrolled in my class, but only nine parents consented to this study. So for this study, nine students participated, five girls and four boys. The characteristics of the nine students include: village English as their first language, they are all Yup'ik Eskimo, and they are all in the second grade. Ages of the participants range from age seven to nine. Reading and writing levels range from levels one to two and their Yup'ik levels are all at level one.

Procedure of Study

Consent forms were obtained prior to any gathering of research data. Consent was obtained in the fall of 2008. The study began when I, the teacher action researcher, began keeping my researcher journals. Some of the entries include participant and parents accounts. I, the researcher kept observational field notes to record participant and parents' reactions to the thematic unit throughout the fall 2008 and spring 2009

semesters. I conducted an questionnaire with my participants in the first semester, and two in the second semester. During the questionnaires, I read the questions and the participants answered on a piece of paper for the first and second questionnaires. The final interview was that of a focus group, which was recorded and transcribed. Three different focus groups were recorded and transcribed. I also kept participant work that documents their personal connections to the lessons gained throughout the year, specifically from December 2008 to May 2009. The data called *Make Connections Organizer* is the heart of this research. The process included participants reading ML and writing connections and responses to information from the ML. Student journal responses were analyzed for themes relating to cultural awareness, respect for diversity, and the relationship between the student's language and culture and other cultures. Below is a table of the procedures that outlines one month; here is March 2009 as an example. Through the thematic units incorporated in the classroom, each month differs in country, culture, language, and book titles. However as outlined here in Table 1, the procedure was the same format for each day.

Table 1: Research Project Week

Example of Book Titles per week	Lesson Taught or Activity for Each Week	Data Collected	Data Analyzed
<p>Week 1</p> <p>March 2-6</p> <p><u>The Jail That Became a Country</u></p> <p>(Non-Fiction)</p> <p>Week 2</p> <p>March 9-13</p> <p><u>Land Down Under</u> (Non-fiction)</p> <p>Week 3</p> <p>March 16-20</p> <p><u>Marsu the Red Kangaroo</u></p> <p>(Fiction)</p> <p>Week 4</p> <p>March 23-27</p> <p><u>How Kangaroos Got Two Legs- An Old Aborigine Tale</u> (Fiction)</p>	<p>Mondays - Introduced Area on maps, Begin Know Want Learn Charts (KWL)</p> <p>Tuesdays- Introduced vocabulary using Graphic Organizers, defining and illustrating vocabulary</p> <p>Wednesdays- Read Fiction or Non-fiction t and made Connections using Graphic Organizer</p> <p>Thursdays- Vocabulary activities using Context Clues or other worksheets</p> <p>Fridays- Multiple Choice Tests, and Writing activities with personal feelings such as "I like or I didn't like" statements.</p>	<p>1 Accounts in my researcher journal.</p> <p>2 <i>Make Connections Organizers</i> for each reading</p> <p>3 Writing samples.</p> <p>4 Interviews</p> <p>5 Student artifacts (pictures, student journals)</p>	<p>Wednesdays- Analyzed <i>Make Connections Organizer</i> using Debbie Miller's (2002) <i>Reading with Meaning</i>.</p> <p>Fridays- Analyzed Tests & Writing</p> <p>1 Tests: Analyzed correct answers in their multiple-choice answers.</p> <p>2 Writing: Analyzed to see if they recalled events, if they can stay on topic, and what they liked or did not like about what they read.</p>

Table 1 outlines the teaching procedure. This procedure begins at the beginning of every month when I introduce the country, culture and language through the use of geographical maps (for example the map of Australia). I begin first by having a whole class discussion to fill out a Know, Want, Learn, (KWL) Chart on butcher paper. During this time the whole class share their knowledge of each country, culture and language or theme. Once the KWL chart is filled out, it is posted somewhere in the classroom as a reference to use throughout the month. The KWL chart is used only at the beginning of each month. Another tool to help with geography is the use of a map, which helps participants map skills. This is a guided lesson on geography. Some lessons include primary directions (North, South, West, and East), specific oceans outlying the given country and/or continent, and possible border countries. An example would be a map of Australia. This map then becomes the cover sheet of the Australia folders students keep in their desks for storing themed papers, and as an easy reference. Once background knowledge and the themed folders are established the weekly lessons begin. Here is a detailed daily procedure for each story read. Something to be noted here is that the stories, countries, and/or cultures and languages may differ for each month, but the procedures remain the same.

Weekly Lessons:

- 1 Monday: Teacher researcher introduces the country or culture and language using maps. KWL charts, introduces songs (example song for Australia is “Waltzing Mathilda” on video). Also used this day are quick writes about something’s they want to learn more about or have given them 5 minute writing

activities where they write about this theme.

- 2 Tuesday: I introduce 6-10 vocabulary words (chosen from each story per week). I guide the class on the board by using a graphic organizer that encourages defining and illustrating each vocabulary word. (Some example vocabulary from the Australia theme include: billabong, kangaroos, Aborigines, and boomerang)
- 3 Wednesday: I mediate each story as we read it aloud. As we read, we stop and discuss important parts of the story. After reading, students are provided with a graphic organizer that helps them make connections. The participants are encouraged to write details and events from the text and then to make connections about what each event reminds them of. (An example text detail would be Australia was first established as a jail, and then became a country. Students would then make connections to that detail stating what this reminds them of) I guide the text or story detail, and participants write their personal connections on their own.
- 4 Thursday: The story is reread if needed due to absences of participants; vocabulary is reinforced using context clues, word groups, crosswords, word searches, or other vocabulary activities. This is teacher guided on the board.
- 5 Friday: This is test day where participants are given a multiple-choice test, and time to apply what they have learned throughout the week in their writing. This individual work and to complete on their own. I prompt the students.

Each day for these reading lessons, I follow a multiliteracy procedure. This process takes about an hour each day.

1. 10-15 minutes: I begin the lessons with a whole class poetry choral reading. This could be thematic, an example is a world exploration poem, I use a poem called Around the World, I also follow a Big Book of Poems that the whole class reads aloud. I guide songs sung at this time using song sheet printouts for participants and/or CD's or Videos; this follows the poetry choral reading activities. The song and the choral reading are used for reading fluency practice.
2. 10-15 minutes :I read aloud a themed picture book. I use this so that participants engage in basic story elements (enhances knowledge of characters, setting, plot and conclusions) and also for the participants to become familiar to where the stories originated
3. 5-10 minutes: I flash word cards as a whole class as participants read aloud (can be themed vocabulary written onto cards or site words). I use this word card time for more fluency practice and to reinforce vocabulary.
4. 10-20 minutes: See weekly lessons (outlined Monday – Friday previously).

This was my detailed daily procedure for each ML used. I continue to explain my procedures.

The questionnaires and interviews were conducted at a different time either earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. They were not conducted during the weekly lesson times. I provided the interview question sheet. The questionnaires and interviews were mediated by reading aloud each question and the participants wrote their responses on their interview question sheets. I followed this process for the first two questionnaires. The last were interviews which were conducted in focus groups of 3, then recorded and

transcribed. This procedure was followed so if participants needed clarification the teacher researcher was able to clarify.

Analysis of Data

I chose the constant comparative method as the overarching framework for my data analysis. Goetz and LeCompte (1981) define this method as, “combing inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed” (p. 58). As social phenomena are recorded and classified, they are also compared across categories. This process undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, continuously feeding back into the process of category coding. “As events are constantly compared with previous events, new topocological dimensions, as well as new relationships, may be discovered” (Goetz & LeCompte, p. 58). Using constant comparative analysis allows the researcher to look for statements and signs of behavior that occur over time during the study (Janesick, 1994). The process of constant comparison “stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 341).

The constant comparative method fits with teacher action research methodology because the teacher is the researcher. I am data driven, and my research methodology is solely driven by my research question and the data collected. As I collected data, I continued to stop and analyze data collected and see how I would need to proceed. As a teacher action researcher, I planned, presented, and assessed lessons based on the needs of the participants, my research, my research questions, and data. This cycle progressed

as data were collected and was based on needs of more data as it pertains to my research question and analysis of participants' current data. (Mills, 2006).

My analysis of data followed these steps:

- 1 Initial coding: This is the process where data is read and I begin to preanalyze by writing inserts where I notice any area of interest within the data.
- 2 Revising initial coding: I sort out my codes to something more organized to rename and to elevate any redundancies.
- 3 Developing an initial list of categories or central ideas: my codes have been modified and I then organize them into categories. Some areas can become topics or subset of topics here. The previous list of codes becomes a set of different topics and subset of topics.
- 4 Modifying initial list based on additional rereading: I begin to prioritize my topics or where I can combine topics.
- 5 Revisiting categories and subcategories: I revisit my list of categories to elevate any redundancies, or where I begin to refine my categories.
- 6 Moving from categories to concepts (themes): I begin to turn my categories into central themes. (Lichtman, 2009).

This process helped me to identify six Yup'ik themes as a result of analyzing the *Make Connections Organizers* that students connected to after reading the ML. (See chapter 4)

The heart of my data includes the *Make Connections Organizers* used and collected December 2008 through May 2009. The process to analyze the data included Miller's

(2002) Reading With Meaning process of responding to literature. Miller (2002)

explains that readers use prior knowledge to construct meaning, and how they can elicit prior knowledge as they read. This is important for making personal connections to the text, which is also connected to students gaining more power over their own ideas and learning. Miller explains that using your schema is described as,

thinking about what you already know, using your background knowledge, as ideas that already exists inside your head, like places you have been, things you have, done, books you have read, all the experiences you have had that makes up who you are and what you know to be true. (p. 57)

This idea of using your schema in reading ties directly to my research because the readers do make meaning and connections with their own identities and prior knowledge. For my research purposes, prior knowledge is the knowledge that the students already have within them. This is knowledge based on their experiences. This knowledge is reflected within their responses to their reading. In making their personal connections to the stories their prior knowledge comes out when they respond to actual text.

Miller defines three ways readers make connections; Text-to-world, Text-to-text, and Text-to self. Text-to-world (T-W) is one way the reader makes connections between the new information with what they know about the world. An example would be if a student reads an informational text on war or fighting in a country such as Iran, he/she might connect that to what goes in other parts of the world where there is war or fighting

such as Pakistan or India. The second way readers make connections is Text-to-text (T-T). In T-T readers connect the literature to something they have already read or heard about such as characters within a written or oral story. For example if students read about and/ or heard an oral story about an Alaskan character such as Raven, they may connect that to the animals they have seen or heard about in similar stories. The third connection is Text-to self (T-S). In T-S readers connect new information to their own personal lives. For example if a reader reads a text about food, this may make him/her reflect on what kinds of food they eat at home. This tool helped me to analyze my own data for this research. Because I was interested in finding out how they connect the stories to their own culture, the last type of connection (T-S) is one that I placed particular emphasis in my data analysis.

Summary

The qualitative study design was selected because it fits with my research question: How will the use of multicultural literature contribute to students' awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages? The methodology to attaining data included interviews, student journals, research journals, and *Make Connections Organizer*. The researcher chose the constant comparative method to analyze the data, which means data were analyzed as the teacher researcher conducted research and data analysis was on going throughout the school year. It was important to analyze data once obtained especially to aide in planning efficient and effective techniques in areas needing more data. In this chapter I discussed the methodology of my research. This included study design, research question, purpose and goals, setting, participants,

lessons, and data analysis techniques. This research was based on my formalized curiosity for the purpose of gaining teaching practices that work, are relevant to my students, and to better serve my people.

Chapter 4 Findings

“May the truth of my tale speak for me.” ~ Unknown

Introduction

Through this research, I sought to convey the personal connections that participants make as a result of engaging in multicultural literature through the organized and multimodal activities (written, oral, visual) of a thematic unit. I developed and implemented a thematic unit of diversity, which prompted the participants to reflect on their own cultures and languages. This research focuses on the students’ personal connections made through the use of Multicultural Literature. The ways the students connected were characterized as personal connections (T-S), text-to-text (T-T) connections, and text-to-world (T-W) connections.

Research Question

How will the use of multicultural literature contribute to students’ awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages?

I was also interested in exploring how the use of multicultural literature might enhance the respect of one’s own culture and language. I will share what I learned about my own use of multicultural literature through this process. In this chapter, I will describe each of the twelve books I used, explain the use of *Making Connections Organizer* and present my findings. However, before sharing my data analysis, I will describe how I designed the thematic unit on diversity.

Thematic Unit Overview

A thematic unit is a group or series of interrelated lessons centered around a common theme, such as a thematic unit on oceans. While my overarching goal was to focus on diversity, I decided to begin this thematic unit with geographical themes such as continents and oceans. I approached my reading lessons similar to Miller (2002). Her reading lesson is designed for a 90-minute reading workshop, which involves mini lessons, reading, responding, conferring, and sharing. Her teaching philosophy includes current research trends like the proficient reader research. This research focuses on comprehension strategies that help readers construct meaning and are pedagogy designed to help thoroughly teach to the needs of the readers. She lists reading strategies as:

- Activating prior knowledge (schema) before during and after reading text
- Creating a visual and other sensory images from text during and after reading
- Drawing inferences from text to form conclusions
- Making critical judgments
- Creating unique interpretations, asking questions, determining the most important ideas and themes in a text
- Synthesizing what they read. (p. 8)

I chose the starting point of geography because it is important for students to be aware of their world and environment. Awareness and knowledge of where other cultures and languages are located in the world fosters learning about people and their locations. Geographical themes refer to the seven continents and some countries that are found

within each continent, apart from Antarctica. I then focused on one culture per continent per month in my teaching. Integrated into my thematic unit, I wanted the students to be able to locate the continents and countries on a world map or globe. For many cultures a key to their identity is their location. Awareness of their locations enhances their identity. I felt that using maps and globes was a good way for students to gain awareness of their world. Knowing peoples' origins helps students foster their visual literacies. I wanted the students to understand that the United States is only one country in a big world. It is important to know that other countries exist and where they are located. I also wanted students to understand that the United States is multicultural and multilingual meaning that the U.S. is made up of various and diverse people. It is important for them to know which countries they are neighbors to and which are far away.

I constructed a table to visually outline my thematic unit, Table 2 (p. 47) depicts my plan by month, theme (continent and/or country), books that were used and the eleven standard guidelines that helped make this a series of interrelated lessons across the board. The standards included the reading, writing, social studies, science, technology, math, and other areas such as, personal/social development, service learning, career development, and cultural expression awareness.

I decided that books would be the most appropriate way to introduce my students to the various locations and cultures. Reading is a way to introduce the idea of diversity because books are the most available resource. Consequently, I researched and collected

books from my school library and my personal library. I looked for books that pertained to these themes, continents, and countries or cultures. Once I collected the books and other sources, such as videos of songs from around the world, I began to implement instruction which included a Know Want Learn (KWL) chart where students tell me what that they know about a particular continent or country (done at the beginning of the month), weekly vocabulary lists, activities that enhanced the use of the weekly vocabulary such as defining, using in context, classifying, and end of the week testing to see if vocabulary was retained as well as comprehension quizzes.

One of the activities, which generated the primary data for my research, was the *Make Connections Organizer*. The *Make Connections Organizer* seemed to directly address my research question. The students also did writing activities each week such as writing about the things they read in their student journals; one topic may have been a response to a book or story they have read or heard. I also included word cards to develop their oral literacy. For this activity, I wrote out each vocabulary word using construction paper cards so that students would be able to read the word out loud, use in a sentence, and hopefully add to it to their own lexicon. The students also sang songs and recited poetry that were related to the themes. Students expressed their findings through an art project every Friday, which were themed projects such as designing a mitten using geometric shaped colored construction paper. The resources such as books, maps, songs, poetry, and art activities were used to teach awareness of the world, and awareness of other cultures and languages. A sample weekly lesson is described in Chapter 3. Table 2 outlines the books I selected.

Table 2: Thematic Unit on Continents and Countries

Events Standards	December- Brazil/South America	January- Winter/ Antarctica	February- Egypt/Africa	March- Aborigines/ Australia	April- Alaska/US, Canada, North America (NA)	May- Mexico/NA
Reading	From Canon and Concrete Amazon Riches	Discovering Antarctica The Mitten	Countries/ Cultures Egypt Egyptian Tomb Discovered	Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs Land Down Under	Land of the Midnight Sun Special Times for Music A Bridge to America	A Day to Celebrate
Writing	Writing From Explorers Perspective	Research Paper	Writing about achieving a goal	Writing about your own land	Yup'ik Biography	Story About a party
Personal/ Social Development	Pride in Community	Cooperation in Winter Survival	Patience	Reflection on Aborigines- Journals	Yup'ik Values	Adversity
Service Learning	Posters to take care of environment	Observation Chart	Build a Pyramid- Group project	Effective means of Communication	Yup'ik Cultural Week	Identify plants and food from Mexico
Career Development	Conservationist	Scientist	Archeologist	Photographer	Traditional Native Jobs	Soldiers- serve your country
Cultural/ Expression Awareness	Live in harmony with the environment	Male/Female roles in Yup'ik	African History- European Explorers	Aboriginal cultural Influences on Australia	Yup'ik commands	Our Own celebrations
Social Studies	Rainforest Treasures	Roles of male/female Penguins	Slavery History	Natural Resources from Australia	Alaska Native History	History of French Invasion
Science	Seeds	Snow Shelters	African Units of measure/tools	Aborigine inventions, tools, innovations	Yup'ik names for Animals, plants, and birds	Water, oceans rivers of Mexico
Technology	Websites for pictures of Brazil Video song	Website for pictures of Antartica	Video song Website for pictures of Egypt	Video song Website for pictures of Australia	Video Song Website for pictures of Alaska, US, Canada	Video Song Website for pictures of Mexico
Mathematics		Weather Observations	Pyramids- geometric shapes		Yup'ik days and months	

Next I describe the books I used for my thematic unit.

Multicultural Literature Used

I wanted to use multicultural literature to direct that awareness on diversity. I decided which books I had, based on the availability of resources at my school and what cultures I could choose that may fit within each theme. For example, for the country India, the school library had books on Gandhi and a book called *Shiva's Fire* by Suzanne Fishers Staples. I also had in my personal library the Steck-Vaugh Vocabulary Connections for levels A-F. The workbooks included stories, vocabulary activities, tests, and writing prompts for each story. I searched all the workbooks for stories that fit the themes.

For this research I selected a variety of multicultural literature from the collection within my classroom and from the Scammon Bay School Library, which covered different genres. Some of the multicultural literature was chosen from the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections Series*, some were chosen from resource books or reference books called *Childcraft*, and others were picture books. The multicultural literature is listed in order from December 2008 to May 2009. The stories are a wide collection of multicultural literature across cultures and genres. Some included fictional picture storybooks, some were non-fiction, and one was a story found online. I wanted a wide range of stories to elicit varying connections from participants. I wanted to see what kinds of personal connections participants made with the different genres present and how those compare and contrast from other genres. The variety in text added a flare to

the varying perspectives across cultures and the participants' own personal grasp of each.

The following lists in chronological order the books we read, a short synopsis for each, and why I chose to include this literature:

From Cannon and Concrete (December 2008, Brazil/South America) taken from the resource book called *Childcraft, The How and Why Library* (1982, Vol. 10, pp. 218-219). This book presents a short summary of how the statue "Christ the Redeemer" which was built as a result of a war between the bordering countries Argentina and Chile. I chose to include this non-fiction book, because I wanted the participants to begin to thinking about how the neighboring countries have a history and have reconciled their differences. Another reason was for them to learn about statues and their significance to some cultures. There is a wooden cross-erected on the hill overlooking Scammon Bay, and it is viewed as significant.

Baseball Bats For Christmas (December 2008, Canada) by Michael Arvaarlluk Kusugaq and Art-Vladya Krykorka (1990). This picture book is set in Repulse Bay in Canada. The story is about how one village was given some Christmas trees, and having no trees in the area, they decided to be creative with the trees. Unaware that they were Christmas trees for decorative use, they decided to make the branches into baseball bats. I chose this book because it was about another Eskimo culture other than Yup'ik. I wanted the students to be aware of the various cultures around Alaska.

The Mitten (January 2009, Antarctica/Winter) by Alvin Tresselt (1964). This book is an old Ukrainian folktale set in winter about a boy who sets off to gather firewood for his grandmother. He loses his mitten in the woods and some freezing forest creatures share the mitten for warmth. This was an excellent book on generosity. I chose this fiction picture book because it was a great way to begin the New Year since many cultures value family connections.

Billy and Maria and the Snowflake (January 2009, Antarctica/Winter) by Daphne G. Thompson (1995) is a non-fiction story from an online resource. This was an informational book of how snowflakes are formed and how frostbite can be avoided. I chose this book because it was relevant to participants regarding winter safety. It can be extended to include how cultures educate their youth in safety and other winter survival themes.

The Magic of Masks (February 2009, Africa) is a story taken from the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connection: A Content Area Approach*, level B, by Sharpe (1997, pp. 23-28). This is a story about how some African cultures wear masks and costumes for ceremonial purposes. It describes that some masks were carved out of wood. Some cultures host ceremonies that involve wearing elaborate costumes and singing and dancing for many occasions such as honoring their dead. I chose this to include this story because it fit with the African theme in February. I wanted the participants to understand that many cultures have ceremonies and they celebrate many occasions, not just birthdays.

Egyptian Tomb Discovered (February 2009, Africa) is a story from the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections: A Content Area Approach*, level E, by Sharpe (1997, pp. 6-11). This is about how anthropologists Carter and Carnarvon searched for and discovered King Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt. I chose this story because it gave a brief insight to Egyptian pharaohs and how the Egyptians valued them by mummifying their bodies and burying them in pyramids. This was a to introduce them to the significance of pyramids and to expose them to different ways people bury their dead.

Land Down Under (March 2009, Australia) is from the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections: A Content Area Approach*, Level B, by Sharpe (1997, pp. 102-107). This is a non-fiction book about Australian land and animals. This is a geographical book describing some of the kinds of land and animals, which are found in Australia. I chose this story because it set the purpose for the exploration of Australia and the Aboriginal culture. I wanted the participants to be aware of how the southern hemisphere is different in comparison to ours. Environmental awareness and naturalistic locations is key in identity of some cultures.

Why the Kangaroo Hops on Two Legs (March 2009, Australia) is an old Aborigine tale found in the reference book *Childcraft: The How and Why Library Stories and Fables* (1982, Vol. 2, pp. 208-211). This is an Aboriginal tale about how the kangaroo transforms from a four-legged creature to a two-legged one as a result of a ceremony. I chose this story because it's a piece of history for the Aborigines, why they conduct celebrations, and depicts their love of oral story telling.

Land of the Midnight Sun (April 2009, Alaska/Arctic/North America) is from the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections: a Content Area Approach*, level D, by Sharpe (1997, pp. 6-11). It's a scientific description of why the Arctic Circle is called the land of the midnight sun. I chose this story because I wanted participants to be aware of their environment and why their land is called land of the midnight sun. As stated before, some cultures rely on their environment and naturalistic intelligences to make meaning. Environmental awareness and naturalistic locations are parts that contribute to the identity of some cultures.

A Bridge to America (April 2009, America/North America) is a non-fiction book found in the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections: A Content Area Approach*, level H, by Sharpe (1989, pp. 6-11). This is a historical and scientific story about "our" ancestors who ascended from prehistoric Asia through the land bridge Beringia and settled across locations in North America. I chose this because it is an ancestral history of the students and myself. It is very important to know one's lineage and how that provides us with a sense of being.

Special Time For Music (April 2009, America/North America) is found in the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections: A Content Area Approach*, level C, by Sharpe (1997, pp. 119-124). This is about Native American cultures and about why ceremonies are important to them. I chose to use this because I wanted the students to be aware of the many Native Americans who live across America. Some similarities to our culture are

how we both value our elders and how we have feasts and celebrations for many occasions.

A Day to Celebrate (May 2009, Mexico/North America) is a non-fiction book about Cinco de Mayo. This was taken from the *Steck-Vaughn Vocabulary Connections: A Content Area Approach*, level B, by Sharpe (1997, pp. 6-11). It shares the history behind Cinco de Mayo, and provides a brief description of Mexican culture and how it is celebrated. I chose this because I wanted the students to be aware of our neighbors in Mexico. Some of their purposes for having celebrations are similar to our own.

Use of the Make Connections Organizer



Once readers read the multicultural literature, they were provided with a graphic organizer titled *Make Connections Organizer* (See Figure 1). In this organizer, the students write each story title, two events that occurred in the multicultural literature and write and/or draw two responses to each detail of what each event reminded them of.

It has a place for the students' name, date, book title, and two sections for the text and two sections called "This reminds me of". The sections called "In the Text" are sections, which are for information from the text read and the sections "This reminds me of" is the section where the students wrote their personal connections to the text. This graphic organizer was used for each multicultural literature used during the research year beginning December 2008 to May 2009. For each participant I have collected twelve *Make Connections Organizers*, one for each of the twelve stories. Nine students participated in this research, resulting in 108 organizers.

Name _____ Date _____

MAKE CONNECTIONS ORGANIZER

The Book _____

In the Text	This Reminds Me Of...
	
	

Make Connections Organizer 1

Figure 1: Make Connections Organizer

After collecting them, I coded the data using Miller's (2002) Text-to-text, Text-to-self, and Text-to-world categories. (See Table 3. Personal Connection Codes)

Table 3: Personal Connection Codes

Text-to-Self (T-S)	Text-to-Text (T-T)	Text-to-World (T-W)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections linked to their personal lives • Readers read about food, they may reflect on their own food at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections linked to literature and something they have already read about • Reader reads (or hears) about a character or event in an Alaskan story such as Raven or surviving off the land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections linked with what they know about the world • Reader reads about topics of war or fighting, they may connect that to other parts of the world such as war in Iran

I encoded each of the *Make Connections Organizers* by the number and types of connections made by each child (see Table 3). If no connections were made, I wrote it as NC for no connection. I also highlighted if the participants used Yup'ik words in their connections. Miller (2002) suggested rating each connection with a one or two. Miller uses a "one" for data that is relevant and helps in making meaningful connections; a "two" indicates that the connections does not help and therefore is not relevant to the text. For my analysis I decided to alter this system somewhat. Instead, I added a "one" to

T-S connections that indicated a strong cultural connection. An example would be if a participant made a connection to how kangaroos nurture their young, with a personal connection stating, “I have a dog”; this is a personal connection and was therefore coded as T-S. However this was not a strong cultural connection. On the other hand, if the participant stated, “My father hunts animals much like the Aborigines hunted the kangaroo”, this would be a strong cultural connection and would be coded as T-S 1. So for the purposes of my research, I rated just the strong personal connections to their own culture. I rated the strong connections using my own Yup’ik background. One idea that helped me to decide what was a “strong cultural connection” was my lived experiences as a long time resident of and my upbringing in Scammon Bay. After I analyzed all the participants’ personal connections, I created Table 4 (p. 57) showing the progression for each participant from December 2008 to May 2009.

Table 4: Make Connections Organizer Data

S	December '08		January '09		February '09		March '09		April '09		May '09	
	<u>From Canon and Concrete</u>	<u>Baseball Bats for Christmas</u>	<u>The Mitten</u>	<u>Billy and Maria and the Snowflake</u>	<u>The Magic of Masks</u>	<u>Egyptian Tombs Discovered</u>	<u>Land Down Under</u>	<u>Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs</u>	<u>Land of the Midnight Sun</u>	<u>A Bridge to America</u>	<u>Special Times for Music</u>	<u>A Day to Celebrate</u>
1	T-T, T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-T, T-S	T-S	T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-T
	T-T	T-S 1	T-S 1	T-S * 1	T-S * 1	T-S 1	T-S	T-S	T-S	T-S	T-S 1	T-S
2	T-T	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S *	T-S	T-S	T-S	NC	T-S	T-S	T-T, T-S
	T-S	T-S	NC	T-S	T-S *	T-S	NC	NC	NC	T-S	T-S	T-S
3	T-S	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-T, T-S		T-S	T-S	T-S *	T-S 1
	T-S	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S *	T-S	NC		T-S	T-S 1	T-S *	T-S
4	NC	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S 1	T-S 1	T-T, T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-S	T-S *	T-W, T-T, T-S
	T-S	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S *	T-S	T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-S	T-S 1	T-S

Key:

T-T=Text-to-Text T-S=Text-to-Self W=Text-to-World NC=No Connection *=Yup'ik Used I=Strong Cultural Connection Blank=Missing Data

Table 4: continued

S	December '08		January '09		February '09		March '09		April '09		May '09	
	<u>From Canon and Concrete</u>	<u>Baseball Bats for Christmas</u>	<u>The Mitten</u>	<u>Billy and Maria and the Snowflake</u>	<u>The Magic of Masks</u>	<u>Egyptian Tombs Discovered</u>	<u>Land Down Under</u>	<u>Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs</u>	<u>Land of the Midnight Sun</u>	<u>A Bridge to America</u>	<u>Special Times for Music</u>	<u>A Day to Celebrate</u>
5	T-W,T-T	T-S 1	NC		T-S 1	NC	T-T, T-S	NC	T-S *	T-T, T-S	T-S *	T-S 1
	T-S	T-S	NC		T-S *	T-S	T-S	NC	T-T,T-S	T-T	NC	T-S
6	T-T	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S 1	T-S	T-S	T-T, T-S	NC	NC	T-T, T-S	T-W, T-T, T-S
	T-S	T-S 1	NC	T-S	NC	T-S 1	T-S	NC	NC*	T-S 1	T-S *	T-S
7			NC	T-S		T-T	T-T, T-S	NC		T-S *	T-S	T-S
			NC	T-S		T-S	NC	NC		T-S	T-S *	T-S
8	T-S	T-S	NC		T-S 1	NC	T-T, T-S	NC	NC	T-S	T-S	NC
	T-T	NC	NC		T-S *	NC	T-S	T-S	NC	NC	T-S	NC
9	T-T	T-S 1	NC	NC	T-S 1				T-S	T-S	T-S	T-T
	T-S	T-S 1	NC	T-S	T-S *				T-S * 1	NC	T-S *	T-S

Key:

T-T=Text-to-Text T-S=Text-to-Self T-W=Text-to-World NC=No Connection *=Yup'ik Used 1=Strong Cultural Connection Blank=Missing Data

The Big Picture

Table 4 shows my data for each of the participants and their connections to all twelve of the stories. The table displays two possible connections per story based on the *Make Connections Organizer*. This totals twenty-four possible connections for each participant. A key is provided at the bottom to explain the different codes used in the table. As stated before, T-T refers to Text-to-text connections, where participants make connections from this story to another they have read, T-S refers to Text-to-self, where the participants make personal connections from reading the literature, and T-W or Text-to-world connections refer to participants making connections from the text to another part of the world. NC means the participants made no connections to the Multicultural Literature, an asterisks or “*” shows where the participants used Yup’ik words, and a “1” refers to a strong cultural connection to their own culture. I designed this table to illustrate the progression of students’ responses from December 2008 to May 2009. The blank areas show missing data because a student was absent that day.

Further Exploring Text-to-Self Connections

Looking at Table 4, I noticed that the total T-S connections were 141 out of the possible 216 connections, the total possible connections are 216 (nine students times 12 stories times two connections per story). Based on the data shown in Table 4 there are: 141 T-S connections, twenty-one T-S1, T-T, twenty-four connections, three T-W connections, and forty-three NC. There were 20 pieces of data missing. Since the T-S connections directly answered my research question, I focused my discussion here. T-S refers to the participants’ own lives, hence how they connect their reading responses to

that of their own Yup'ik culture. All nine participants made T-S connections in various stories. Out of the 141 T-S connections, 21 were T-S strong cultural connections, which is about 15 percent. For example Student nine made strong cultural connections to the *Magic of Masks* in stating, "In Africa carvers carve wood. This reminds me of Taylor carve." (Name changed to Taylor to protect real carver's identity). Taylor is a well-known ivory carver in the village. Carving is practiced by some of the villagers. They carve to earn money and to show part of their cultural history through the products such as carving of animals, carvings of hunting, and carvings that value *Yuuyaraq* or the Way of Life. On the same *Make Connections Organizer* student nine even includes a Yup'ik word in her second strong cultural connection to this by stating "They used the masks to dance. This reminds me of Yuraq" Yuraq means Eskimo Dancing. In another example, Student five made strong cultural connection to *Baseball Bats for Christmas* when she wrote, "The pilot brought them six trees. This reminds of bringing in wood." For a lot of children in Scammon Bay, chopping and bringing in wood for their wood stoves is a chore. In looking at Table 4 it becomes clear that some stories lead to more strong personal connections and more use of Yup'ik by the students. Table 5 displays each story with their total T-S, strong cultural connections, and number of Yup'ik words used. Referring to Table 4, 12 strong cultural connections were made to the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas*.

Table 5: Strong Cultural Connections and Use of Yup'ik Word by Story

Story	Number of Personal Connections (T-S)	Number of Strong Cultural Connections (T-S1)	Number of Yup'ik words used *
<i>From Canon and Concrete</i>	9	0	0
<i>Baseball Bat for Christmas</i>	15	12	0
<i>The Mitten</i>	2	1	0
<i>Billy and Maria and the Snowflake</i>	13	1	1
<i>The Magic of Masks</i>	15	8	8
<i>Egyptian Tombs Discovered</i>	12	3	0
<i>Land Down Under</i>	13	0	0
<i>Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs</i>	7	2	0
<i>Land of the Midnight Sun</i>	10	1	3
<i>A Bride to America</i>	14	3	1
<i>Special Times for Music</i>	17	2	7
<i>A Day to Celebrate</i>	14	2	0

Eight strong cultural connections and eight Yup'ik words were used for the story *The Magic of Masks*. Seven Yup'ik words were used in the story *Special Times for Music*. *The Magic of Masks* was the story participants connected to the most out of all the other stories, with eight connections involving strong cultural connections and eight

connections involving Yup'ik words. By this time these two stories were read in March and April, many participants were aware that *Yuraq* (Eskimo Dance) were hosted in our village and in neighboring villages. In the story *Billy and Maria and the Snowflake*, 13 out of 14 connections were T-S, and one NC. Living in rural Alaska, most people can identify with snow and getting frostbites. For *The Mitten*, only Student 1 made T-S connections while the rest made NC. This was the first story read after the Christmas break, so the students may have forgotten how to make connections to the text after the two-week break. In addition, perhaps the illustrations in this book depicted a far-fetched imagination of animals snuggling in a lost mitten. The reality of animals in a village differs tremendously. In Scammon Bay we value animals for food such as moose meat and fish; their fur is used to make clothing such as fur hats. Another aspect in Yup'ik culture involves the tales *qulirat* and *qanemcit* that tell Yup'ik history and usually depict animal characters that help teach students morals to live by. Another story where seven NC were made was the story *Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs*. The participants had never seen a real kangaroo, and perhaps, this story was a little too far from home to connect to. Another reason could be that in reality animals do not interact with humans. Although *qulirat* and *qanemcit* do entail stories of animals interacting with humans, there are morals to be learned in these kinds of stories. The students are familiar with *qulirat* and *qanemcit* where lessons are to be learned and hopefully become part of their Yuuyaraq or Way of Life. *Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs* is a story about how the kangaroo transforms into an animal that hops on its hind legs. I did not notice a moral to that story.

Once I collected all the *Make Connections Organizers*, and after I coded the strong cultural connections, and the Yup'ik words used, I wrote out all the strong connections and the Yup'ik words on a piece of paper. Based on my findings, the following Yup'ik themes emerged.

Table 6: Yup'ik Cultural Themes

Theme	Description
<i>Native Crafts</i>	This theme involved student responses such as, “ my grandmother made me mittens”, “my uncle carves”, “my dad’s carving”, “Pius carves wood”, and “Hernandez is carving wood”. (Names changed to protect identity of carvers). All the connections refer to Native Craft.
<i>Chores</i>	This theme involved student responses to helping out in and around the home. Some of the responses include putting wood in the wood stove, sawing wood, bringing in wood into the house, and shoveling snow.
<i>Childhood Games</i>	This theme involved responses about childhood experiences. One of the experiences for a lot of the students is lap game.
<i>Outdoor Activity</i>	This theme involved family and outdoor trips. Some of the responses included walking in the mountains, going to Kusilvak (Kusilvak Mountain) with the family, settling down in Scammon Bay, going to camp, going by boat, and walking across the carvaq(stream).
<i>Family Values</i>	This theme involved connections to specific family members. Some connections included listening to elders, remembering Aata (his grandfather) the carver, “my mom is teaching me”, and remembering family members that died.
<i>Subsistence</i>	This theme involved student’ connections to hunting game. Some connections included hunting with their dad, “my dad catching birds”, and “we have guns for hunting”.

Yup'ik Cultural Themes Emerge

After intense engagement in the data, I began to note what the strong cultural connections were. I highlighted all the T-S connections that involved strong cultural connections and noted them with the number “1”. I wrote these strong cultural connections or statements onto a sheet of paper and noticed six themes. The themes included *Native Crafts*, *Chores*, *Childhood Games*, *Outdoor Activities*, *Family Values*, and *Subsistence*. I chose to structure the themes in this fashion because of how the connection sentences were written (see Table 6).

In the *Childhood Games* theme, lap game came up in several of the students' connections. Lap game is played with a bat and a ball. There are two teams, one is “In”(batting) and the other is “Out”(defense). The game is played in a linear fashion; in other words the batters run straight horizontally across to a designated third base. The key is to run to the base without being hit by the team in defense, who can throw the ball and hit the runner. The pitcher is always at the first base next to the batter and stands beside the batter to pitch the ball. Lap game is similar to baseball, which involves two teams, bat and ball, making home run, and taking the runners out. However it differs from baseball because the pitcher is there at first base next to the batter, the runners run straight ahead and back instead of in a diamond, and the defenders can throw the ball a distance to hit the runners to take them out. This is a traditional game played by any ages at the village. I grew up playing this too. Five of the students made the T-S connection to lap game from the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas*.

In the *Native Crafts* theme, carving came up in several of the students' connections. Several villagers in town carve either wood, and/or ivory. Most of them have been guests at the Scammon Bay School to teach the students carving using soap. Soap was used because it is easier for the students to carve as opposed to ivory and wood. One student said, "This reminds me of my dad carving." I chose to place this here because the word carve was used as a verb. The student made the connection from the story *The Magic of Masks* where they carved wooden masks for ceremonial celebrations. Eight strong cultural connections and eight Yup'ik words were used for *The Magic of Masks*.

In the *Chores* theme, several students made connections to bringing in wood, sawing or chopping wood, putting wood in the woodstove, and bringing in wood into the home. Many homes use woodstoves for, so children are expected to do their part in homemaking, and a chore is gathering wood, chopping and/or sawing wood, and bringing in wood into the home. Students made this strong cultural connection from the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas* where the children cut the wood in the story.

In the *Outdoor Activity* theme, six participants connected to outdoor activities. Some of their experiences include trips with their families either by boat, plane, or within town. Some of their strong cultural connections included going to Kusilvak (Kusilvak Mountains) by boat, going to camp, traveling by boat, or walking across the carvaq (stream).

In the *Family Values* theme, participants made connections to their upbringing and their family experiences. Four participants made strong cultural connections to the lives around their family by making statements like “This reminds me of my mom teaching me”, recalling instances where they listened to elders, remembering times they were with their grandparents such as “This reminds me of my Aata, the carver.” and thinking about their loved ones who died. I chose to include “This reminds me of my Aata, the carver “ here in Family Values as opposed to Native Crafts because carver is used as a noun in this connection. Some of the stories they connected to were *The Magic of Masks* and *Special Times for Music*.

Finally in the *Subsistence* theme, three participants made strong cultural connections to the Yup’ik subsistence lifestyle. Most of the people in Scammon Bay still practice living off the land by hunting, fishing, and gathering for food. Some of the strong cultural connections include statements such as “This reminds me of catching birds,” and “This reminds me of going hunting with my dad”. One story they connected subsistence to was *Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs*. They seemed to connect to this story because of subsistence. The Aborigines hunted some game animals such as kangaroos, as do Yup’ik people in Scammon Bay. Here we hunt moose, seal, and birds for food.

In summary when I wrote out the exact phrases for all the strong ties to their own culture, I began to see theses cultural themes emerge. Some made strong personal cultural connections, some did not make many connections, and some did not use Yup’ik

words at all. However, I was able to code and create themes with the strong personal connections given in the data. To dig deeper into this research, I chose to create profiles of four of the profiles of four participants

In this section I will profile four of the students for a closer in-depth analysis. I chose to highlight the following four as representatives of the whole class: Student 1, Student 2, Student 4, and Student 6 (See Table 4). One reason for choosing these students was because all of these students turned in all pieces of data. The second was that I wanted to select two boys and two girls because I wanted an equal amount to represent both genders. Students 1 and 4 are girls, while Student 2 and 6 are boys. They all differ in terms of personal connections made, however they all made strong cultural connections and they all used Yup'ik words several times. Three out of four made NC in one or two of the stories, while Student 1 made connections to all twelve stories. Some of the data I used besides the *Make Connections Organizers* are: a) general classroom observations and student characteristics, b) relations for each student to the big picture (Table 4), c) why they made strong Text-to-self (T-S) connections. In each profile I share some raw data (actual student *Make Connections Organizers*), and further discuss the themes their T-S connections fit into. I also take a look at the interviews conducted at the end of the year (See appendix); specifically looking at question 11, "What are some languages that other people speak in other countries? Can you tell me any phrases you learned in class?" I decided to analyze this further because students were asked to recall all the cultures and countries from the school year, and I wanted to share some of their responses. This recorded interview was conducted on May 12, 2009 as a focus

group. Students sat at a round table with the teacher in groups of four and I asked them to draw a family activity and color while I asked the questions. I transcribed their recordings and collected their drawings at the end. I asked them what their pictures were about and noted their responses in my researcher journal. For each student, I will take a close look at the data from the Interviews, their drawings, and my researcher journal.

Student 1

Student 1 is a second grade girl. She is one of six children in her family. Her favorite subject in school is reading and her favorite book is *Shiva's Fire* by Suzanne Fisher Staples. She also liked to read *Miss Daisy is Crazy*. She likes eating fruit and her favorite place is in the school gym. Her favorite games include playing not-it and lap game. She noted that she has learned a lot about India and would therefore like to see a sari. Next year she wants to learn about Angola. She says her plan for the summer is to go to camp and also to make dolls.

In relation to the big picture based on Table 4, Student 1 made four T-T connections, 22 T-S connections, nine strong cultural connections, and used Yup'ik in three connections. She is the one that made the most T-S connections among the four chosen here. She made the most cultural connections among the four, and used more Yup'ik words as well.

In reference to the Yup'ik themes, Student 1 made references in five out of the six themes, which indicates strong Yup'ik connections. They included *Native Crafts* with her connection to the story *The Mitten* by Alvin Tresselt. In the theme *Chores* her

connection was “This reminds me of putting woods in the stove”. Her connection to the theme *Childhood Games* was the statement “This reminds me of lapgame.” which referred to the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas* by Michael Aarvarluk Kusugaq. For the theme *Outdoor Activity* she stated “This reminds me of getting frostbite when we went to coozlefack.” (Yup’ik for Kusilvak Mountains) referring to the story *Billy and Maria and the Snowflake*. Under *Family Values*, she recalled some family members that died. In her response to Interview question 11, “What are some languages that other people speak in other countries? Can you tell me any phrases you learned in class?” her phrase was “Cauga”, this is Yup’ik for “What is that?”

I find this interesting because after exploring a number of countries and cultures, and reading about other countries through the multicultural literature throughout the school year; her first response is Yup’ik. The data seems to show that Student 1 has strong ties to her Yup’ik culture and that awareness and respect for her culture is consistently connected to the stories she read. This demonstrated that she is a strong reader who was capable early on to make personal connections to the stories she read. The strong presence of her Yup’ik culture was evident in her data as she learned more and more about other cultures.


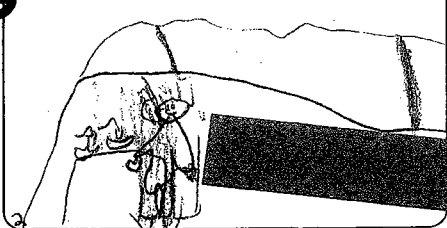


She had strong cultural connections to the stories, *Baseball Bats for Christmas*, *The Mitten*, *Billy and Maria and the Snowflake*, *The Magic of Masks*, *Egyptian Tombs Discovered*, *A Bridge to America*, and *Special Times for Music*. She used Yup’ik in the

stories: *Billy and Maria and the Snowflake*, *The Magic of Masks*, and *Special Times for Music*.

Date 2/12/09

MAKE CONNECTIONS ORGANIZER

Book The Magic of Masks

the Text	This Reminds Me Of...
<p>Africa wood carvers the wood.</p> 	<p>This Reminds Me of my uncle carving airings</p> 
<p>use the masks to see,</p> 	<p>This Reminds me of <u>yuray</u>.</p> 

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Make Connections Organizer

Figure 2: Student 1's Make Connection Organizer shows her connection to the story *The Magic of Masks*

Student 2

Student 2 is a second grade boy. He is one of eight children. His favorite subject in school is singing and his favorite book is *Whale Snow*. He plans to read *Cinderella*. He noted he has learned a lot about rabbits. He would like to see gold and his favorite game is chess. Next year he would like to learn about the Gulf of Alaska. He says his plan for the summer is to visit Bethel.

In relation to the big picture represented in Table 4, Student 2 made 17 T-S connections, two T-T connections, and did not write connection to five of the stories. He made one strong personal connection, which was to the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas*. His strong cultural connection was “The pilot brought them six trees. This reminds me of soing wood”. He was referring to “sawing” which was shown in his drawing. In two of his T-S connections he chose Yup’ik words. In *The Magic of Masks*, he stated, “African wood carvers carve wood. This reminds me of my oto carver.” His word “oto” refers to “Aata” (Aata is Yup’ik for dad, but many use this for their grandfathers too). The other Yup’ik word used was found in the connection to the same book, “They used the masks to dance. This reminds me of Yuraq.” He thought of Yuraq or Eskimo Dance. He did not connect to the stories *The Mitten* and *the Land of the Midnight Sun*. Like many of the students who did not connect to the story, *The Mitten* did seem unrealistic in its depiction of animals all snuggling in a mitten to keep warm. He and the other boy were the only two among the four who did not connect to *Land of The Midnight Sun*. This was a non-fiction, therefore did not have characters. This could be a reason he was not able to make connections. Another non-fiction story is *Land*

Down Under, which Student 2 made NC (No Connection). So the data seems to indicate Student 2 prefers and connects to fiction books.

His connections were most prevalent in one theme *Chores*. He made connections to *Baseball Bats for Christmas* by stating “The pilot brought them six trees. This reminds me of [soing] wood.” He also had connections to Family Values in stating, “African carvers carve wood. This reminds me of my oto carver.” As stated previously, “Oto” refers to “Aata”. (Aata is Yup’ik for father, but can be used for grandfather). This statement shows that he values his grandfather, carver.





In his response to interview question 11 “What are some languages that other people speak in other countries? Can you tell me any phrases you learned in class?” his response was “Aah, alartua”, which is Yup’ik for “Aah, I made a mistake.” Like Student 1, his word choice was Yup’ik. This demonstrated his regard for Yup’ik by choosing to use Yup’ik words. The data shows why he values his family and thus does his chores such as sawing wood. For him his family and his chores seem to define his identity. The stories *Baseball Bats for Christmas* and *The Magic of Masks* tapped into his identity and he was able to show his strong cultural connections. He made the strong cultural connection early on and stated Yup’ik words in the middle of the year. He had seventeen T-S connections. I see that he does show respect to his family through his references to his “Aata” and his chores. Families are a big part of Yup’ik culture and further, elders are regarded with much respect. Student 1 shows he has respect for his Yup’ik family.

He used Yup'ik in the story *The Magic of Masks*. Figure 3 shows my analysis where I marked the organizer highlighting the T-S and the Yup'ik word used.

Time _____ Date _____

MAKE CONNECTIONS ORGANIZER

Book The Magic of Masks

In the Text	This Reminds Me Of...
<p>1 In Africa wood carvers carve wood</p> 	<p>2 This reminds me of carver</p> 
<p>3 They use the mask to dance</p> 	<p>4 This reminds me of young</p> 

Make Connections Organizer

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Figure 3: Student 2's Make Connection Organizer shows his connection to *The Magic of Masks*.

Student 4

Student 4 is a second grade girl. She is one of four children. Her favorite school subject is gym and her favorite book is *Shiva's Fire*. She planned to read *Shiva's Fire* by Suzanne Staples Fisher again. Her favorite place in school is the computer lab. Her favorite school lunch is fruit and she wants to make flowers. She would like to see a kangaroo. Next year she wants to learn about China, and she would like to go to Anchorage. This year she learned a lot about India and next year she wants to do times (multiplication). The best thing that happened to her in school this year was exploring India and other places and countries.

Referring to Table 4, Student 4 made 21 T-S connections, two T-T connections, one T-W connection, and did not connect (NC) to two stories, which were *From Canon and Concrete* and *The Mitten*. She made seven strong cultural connections and used Yup'ik in two T-S connections. She made connections in all six Yup'ik themes. For the first theme, *Native Craft*, she stated, "In Africa wood carvers carve wood. This reminds me of my dad carving.", which was in reference to *The Magic of Masks*. For the second theme, *Chores*, she stated, "This reminds me of me bringing in wood to our house." which refers to *Baseball Bats for Christmas*. For the third theme *Childhood Games*, she stated, "This reminds me of playing lapgame", which refers to the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas*. For the fourth theme, *Outdoor Activity*, she stated, "This reminds me of going camp." which is in reference to the story *Why the Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs*. This is was one of her strong cultural connections. She stated, "This reminds me of my mom teaching." which indicated to me that she regards family values highly. For many

Yup'ik children, a mother is primary teacher, children learn from her by watching and doing things. Some things the mom demonstrates are cutting fish, plucking birds, and butchering seals. These lessons help children learn about preparation to ensure survival. The other strong cultural connection was to the story *Why the Kangaroo Hops on Two Legs* in which she stated, "This reminded me of my dad catching birds." in which *Subsistence* is linked to her identity.

Her response when asked to draw a family activity was to draw boat riding and cutting fish. These two activities would fit into the themes *Subsistence* and *Outdoor Activity*. As previously discussed, the class has studied many different cultures and it seems that Student 4 chose to reflect on her own culture and language.

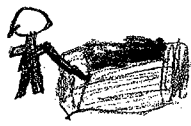



She made strong cultural connections to the stories *Baseball Bats for Christmas*, *The Magic of Masks*, *Egyptian Tomb Discovered*, *Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs*, and *Special Times for Music*. She used Yup'ik in the stories *The Magic of Masks*, and *Special Times for Music*.

Figure 4 shows her connection to the story *Baseball Bats for Christmas*.

Date 8/12/09

MAKE CONNECTIONS ORGANIZER

Book The Magic of Masks

the Text	This Reminds Me Of...
<p>Africa woodcarvers wood.</p> 	<p>2 This Reminds Me of My Dad carving</p> 
<p>used the to dance.</p> 	<p>4 This Reminds Me of them <u>Yaraq.</u></p> 

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Make Connections Organizer

Figure 4: Student 4's Make Connection Organizer shows her connection to *The Magic of Masks*.

Student 6

Student 6 is a second grade boy. He is one of nine children. His favorite subject is math and his favorite book is *10 Minutes Till Bedtime*. He would like to read more bedtime stories. His favorite place in the school is the computer lab. His favorite school lunch is fruit and he noted he wants to learn how to make a house. He likes to play chess and football. He would like to see a whale and would like to make a car. This year he has learned a lot about Pakistan. He would like to travel to Bethel. Next year he would like to learn about Europe.

Referring to Table 4, Student 6 made 16 T-S connections, 4 T-T connections, 1 T-W connection, and made NC (No Connections) to five of the stories, which were *The Mitten*, *The Magic of Masks*, *Why Kangaroos Hop on Two Legs*, *Land of the Midnight Sun*, and *A Bridge to America*. Out of the 16 T-S connections, he made five strong cultural connections. Out of the twelve stories he used Yup'ik words in two. The first and second strong cultural connections were in reference to *Baseball Bats for Christmas* stating, "The pilot brought them six trees. This reminds me of bringing in wood." , and "They use the trees for bats. This reminds me of playing lapgame." These connections also showed his strong connections within the two themes of *Chores* for bringing in wood, and *Childhood Games* for the playing lapgame response. The third strong cultural connection was made in the story *The Magic of Masks* when he stated, "In Africa woodcarvers carve wood. This reminds me of Phil carve a wood." (Phil is a name change to keep the identity of the carver secret). This connection fits into the theme *Native Crafts*. The fourth strong cultural connection was to the story *A Bridge to*

America when he stated “My ancestors walked from Asia. This reminds me of going by boat.” His statement is a strong cultural connection that fits into the theme *Outdoor Activities*. Perhaps the journey his ancestors made reminded him of his own journey. The last strong cultural connection was from the story *Special Time for Music* where he stated, “The elders taught their children’s children. This reminds me of a little girl Yuraq.” (Yuraq is Yup’ik for Eskimo Dance). For his family activity picture in which he was asked to draw during the focus group interview, Student 6 drew a picture about working and making akutaq. (Akutaq is Yup’ik for Eskimo Ice-cream and made out of berries).




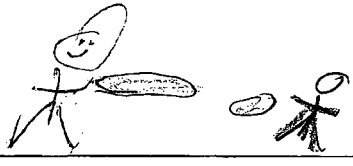
In looking through my researcher journal, I found that on December 2, 2008 during our discussion on ingredients for making Akutaq Student 6 was the only one that used Yup’ik word such as “callaq”. (Callaq is Yup’ik for shortening). Another time on February 10, 2009, I was reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* aloud. In this book the main character longed for sweets, Student 6 referred to longing as “cucuk”. (Cucuk is Yup’ik for wanting and longing for something that others may have). Looking back at my researcher journal Student 6 used Yup’ik many times throughout the year and seemed to speak more Yup’ik than the other students.

Student 6 made strong cultural connections to the stories *Baseball Bats for Christmas*, *The Magic of Masks*, *Egyptian Tombs Discovered*, and *A Bridge to America*. Although Student 6 did not connect to the story *Land of the Midnight Sun*, he used a Yup’ik word and in the story *Special Time for Music*.

Name _____ Date 12/10/09

MAKE CONNECTIONS ORGANIZER

My Book Baseball Bats for Christmas

In the Text	This Reminds Me Of...
<p>1 The pilot brought them six trees.</p> 	<p>2 This Reminds Me of Bringing in wood.</p> 
<p>3 They used the trees for bats.</p> 	<p>4 This Reminds me of playing lap game.</p> 

Make Connections Organizer 1

Figure: 5 Student 6's Make Connection Organizer shows his connection to *Baseball Bats for Christmas*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the analysis of data illustrated how students responded to multicultural literature read in the thematic units designed to contribute students' awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages. From these data I learned that students primarily made Text-to-self connections. I also discovered many of these connections indicated a strong cultural connection that linked activities from the students' own Yup'ik culture to those of the cultures we were reading about

In the next chapter, I describe what I noticed overall as a result of my research. I further discuss the use of multicultural literature in instructional units, and I rate books that were highlighted in this chapter. I also reflect on my own journey as a teacher-researcher, the changes I discovered in my instruction, and provide criteria in the selection and use of multicultural literature.

Chapter 5: Implications

“Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will “

~ Frederick Douglass

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on what I noticed about the responses to multicultural literature overall as a result of my research. I also discuss what I learned about the elements of multicultural literature and how this term has evolved for me over the course of my study. Finally, I discuss implications for teacher actions researchers and for teachers. I also discuss how this research has transformed me as a teacher.

Overall Results

The data seems to indicate that through the use of multicultural literature, students’ became aware of other cultures and languages and that contributed to reflection about their own Yup’ik culture and language. In looking back at the big picture, Table 4, among the 196 connections shown, thirty-nine made No Connections or NC. This data seems to indicate that multicultural literature does contribute to students’ awareness and understanding of other cultures and languages. Of 196 connections made (refer to Table 4, p. 68) 141 were Text-to-Self or T-S connections. Also, of the 141 T-S connections, twenty-one connections included Yu’p’ik words. Based on their responses, Yup’ik words used, and strong cultural connections, I outlined six themes; *Native Crafts, Chores, Childhood Games, Outdoor Activities, Family Values, and Subsistence* (see Table 6, p. 78). Out of the 141 T-S connections, thirty-five included strong cultural

connections that outlined cultural themes. Based on the data, exploring other cultures and languages seem to help students make connections to their own culture and language in very specific ways. More than half of the 196 connections included T-S connections. I found this interesting because the themes emerged as a result of studying other cultures and languages through the use of multicultural literature. The themes that emerged from students' responses are representative of their Yup'ik lifestyle and they were prompted through multicultural literature. To the students being Yup'ik means being able to do native crafts, doing chores, having childhood games, participating in outdoor activities, having family values, and participating in subsistence activities.

Multicultural Literature

The purpose of this research was to see what connections students made with the books I had selected. I was also hoping to find evidence that using multicultural literature would enhance a student's respect of his/her culture and language. Through the use of multicultural literature, students may gain awareness and respect for diverse populations. This study involved my own love for diversity and my personal goal of striving for cultural pluralism. For me, the exploration of different cultures and languages creates an appreciation of my own. I wanted to explore whether the experience of using multicultural literature would also allow my students to appreciate their own culture and language.

To further analyze my findings I want to address what I discovered about multicultural literature and how that evolved over time. To do this I address several

questions.

- What did I learn about what multicultural literature is in general?
- What are the characteristics that identify multicultural literature?
- How will this help me as a teacher to choose multicultural books in the future?

What did I learn about multicultural literature in general?

To help me answer this question, I looked back at Seale and Slapin (2005) and the discussion of issues related to texts about minority, particularly American Native topics. This discussion helped me to question authenticity and accuracy of books about cultures, especially American Native cultures. The emphasis on making sure a culture is represented accurately through authentic voices of those who know or are insiders to the culture has made me more aware of these issues. Therefore, I make sure to read text first, using a critical eye before I introduce the books to my classroom.

Another source of discovery about multicultural literature was the typology developed by Cai and Bishop (1994). Cai and Bishop classify multicultural literature into three primary categories: world literature, cross-cultural literature, and parallel literature. World literature is defined as and broken up into the categories “to include folktales, fiction, and the like from non-Western countries or other underrepresented groups outside the United States, generally peoples from the Southern or Eastern Hemisphere (p. 62). There are two types of cross-cultural literature. This means ML as written by an outsider perspective, or written by authors who are not from the culture

they seek to portray in their writing. The first is literature that shows interrelations among people of different cultures. The second is books about a culture group written by a write from another cultural group or outside author. The third category is parallel literature. Parallel literatures are types of ML written by native or authors of color. This is an insider perspective.

What are the characteristics that identify multicultural literature?

To help me answer the second question, I developed a table (see Table 7) that lists criteria described by Seale and Slapin and Cai and Bishop. These are represented in the first two columns. The third column combines both criteria and is designed to provide teachers with a list of elements to consider and look for when choosing multicultural literature for use in instruction.

Table 7: Criteria for choosing multicultural literature

Cai & Bishop Typology (1994)	Seale & Slapin/Oyate Criteria (2005)	Combined Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Literature- include folktales, fiction, and the like from non-Western countries or other underrepresented groups outside the United States Cross-Cultural- Literature that is written by outside authors or authors about a culture that is not same as his/her own <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Literature that shows interrelations among people of different cultures. (More reference type literature) b) Books about a culture group written by a write from another cultural group or outside author (more story line literature) Parallel Culture-types of ML written by native or authors of color. This is an insider perspective. 	<p>Look for the author and/or illustrator's relationship to the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the author situate the story in the context of <i>her</i> culture and family? Does the author acknowledge and honor the source of the story? Does the author validate the story (e.g. from a specific Elder) or reflect her own relationship to the story? Is the illustrator connected to the culture or to the story? How? <p>Look for the author and/or illustrator's understanding of the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the story portrayed in a culturally appropriate way? Are there author or illustrator's notes? Do these clearly tell of the origins of the story? Does the author adhere to the original story? If there are changes, does the author tell why? Does the author justify a retelling of the story in a way that implies the culture has disappeared? OR Does the author honor the continuing existence of the culture and relate it from the insider perspective of the people? Does the author's own cultural belief system overshadow the belief system of the people whose story is being told? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give first priority to books of parallel authorship-the author and/or illustrator are from the culture they are portraying in a story or non-fiction. If the book is a cross-cultural book and the author or illustrator is not from the culture she is portraying ask the questions listed under the two main headings outlined by Seale and Slapin. If the book is classified as World Literature, check the date and make sure it is a recent publication. Also, apply the Seale and Slapin criteria. Avoid using books that do not meet the criteria outlined by Seale and Slapin.

How will this help me as a teacher to choose multicultural books in the future?

Looking back at my list, I have decided that there are some books I may and may not use again. I have chosen three books to illustrate this. *Baseball Bats For Christmas* provides an example of a book I would use. *From Cannon and Concrete* provides an example of a book I would not use. *The Mitten* provides an example of a book that I initially thought I would not use, because of the poor response level for students; but, upon further reflection on the above criteria, turned into a book that could be presented in a different way.

Baseball Bats For Christmas by Michael Arvaarlluk Kusugaq and Art-Vladya Krykorka is a picture book set in Repulse Bay, Canada. The story is about how one village was given Christmas trees, and having no trees in the area, they decided to be creative with the trees. Unaware that they were Christmas trees for decorative use, they decided to make the branches into baseball bats. This seemed to prompt the students to reflect on their favorite pastime, which is lap game. In reading this, I could not help but to remember my own childhood memories about lap game. This story had fifteen T-S connections, and twelve strong cultural connections. I choose to use this book again because it is about another Eskimo culture other than Yup'ik. The book also brought up the idea of how the Eskimo people shared what they had during the holiday. I wanted them to be aware of the various cultures within and the areas surrounding Alaska.

In terms of the criteria listed in Table 7, this falls within Cai and Bishop's parallel culture category because the author is from the culture. The narrative also

represents an accurate representation of the culture and the illustrations depict authentic scenes and dress you can also see a short biography of the author in the book as well as a map showing where Repulse Bay is.

From Cannon and Concrete presents a short summary of how the statue “Christ the Redeemer” was built as a result of a war between the bordering countries Argentina and Chile. This story had nine T-S connections, but no strong cultural connections and no Yup’ik. I classified this as multicultural literature. It could be that the concept of conflict, such as war, is far beyond the thinking of second grade students. This story takes place in South America, which may also contribute to their lack of connection due to the distance.

In terms of the criteria listed in Table 7, the story *From Cannon and Concrete* falls within Cai and Bishop’s cross-cultural literature category defined in section “a” because it shows the interrelations about two countries which are Chile and Argentina. I can also categorize this story in section “b” of cross-cultural literature because it was written about two countries from the stand -point of an outside. *From Canon and Concrete* depicts two countries that had problems between them that led to war, however they found a way to solve their differences and coexist.

The Mitten by Alvin Tresselt is an old Ukrainian folktale set in winter about a boy who sets off to gather firewood for his grandmother. He loses his mitten in the woods and some freezing forest creatures share the mitten for warmth. I would not classify this as multicultural literature and perhaps will not use this for research again.

This book does not seem to address multicultural by the definition provided. It does not address the customs of real characters, but that of animals. For many of the students' reality is that animals are viewed differently here. Animals can be viewed as pets, such as dogs and cats, food for hunting such as seal, moose, and fish, and animals can be viewed as characters within oral stories such as in *qulirat* and *qanemcit*. *Qulirat* and *qanemcit* are oral stories that depict animals with spirits and usually the stories have morals for children to learn from. From the view of my students, perhaps it is unrealistic for animals to be cold and snuggle together in a mitten. In their world- view some lessons that students need to learn include what survival techniques help some animals endure. It could be animal lifestyles like hibernating, gathering food, and/or physical features such as fur. Therefore, at first glance, and based on the response level of my students, this book seemed far-fetched for native students to connect to.

However, upon further reflection, I could see a possible connection between the Ukrainian folk tale and *qulirat*. In terms of Cai and Bishop, they both fall under World Literature. Both folktales and *qulirat* depict animals as beings, and these types of stories teach morals. In *The Mitten*, one aspiring moral is generosity.

In light of what I learned, I would try to select more books that fit the criteria of multicultural literature as described in Table 7. I would also select books that reflect the racial, ethnic, and social diversity that is characteristic of our pluralistic society and of the world.

Implications for Teacher Action Researchers

If I were to continue this research, I would collect more data using my researcher journal, which seemed to be my weakest data due to the fact that I had not kept recording as a daily or weekly practice. Some of the things I would have continued to record were the students use of Yup'ik words, more of their experiences from what they have seen and/or heard at home or outside of the school setting, and possibly their interactions outside of the classroom such as the lunchroom, gym, or computer lab. I would also continue using the *Make Connections Organizer*, which seemed to work as a data gathering technique as far as students' own connections to the text or multicultural literature. I restate this was the heart of the data in this research and I do suggest teachers and researchers as well as others who are interested in helping students respond to literature to use the *Make Connections Organizer*.

What I would do differently? As far as the research methodologies used in this research referring to the use of the *Make Connections Organizers* for all multicultural literature read, focus group interviews, and the researcher journal; I would conduct more focus group interviews throughout the study year. Perhaps a focus group interview conducted per quarter. This would provide me with solid data from beginning to the end of the year. I also would take better notes within my researcher journal from the start to the end so that I would be able to reflect more as the research progresses. I would make it a daily activity beginning in August even before the consent forms were signed so that I would be adjusted to writing daily by the time the consent forms were signed.

Implications for Teachers

As a teacher using multicultural literature and using culturally relevant curriculum, I would have included more authentic and insider authors as far as the multicultural literature used. In reflecting back to the titles I selected, they seemed to be more non-fiction and fewer picture books with story lines. I also did not use insider authors or authors of color. I would also have selected more current titles. This research has helped me as a teacher to be aware and constantly vigilant in selecting books that may influence readers. I have to be aware of the content before I use the books with my classroom. Prior to this research, I never seemed to be aware of the inaccuracy of some reading material.

I suggest using Seale and Slapin (2005) as a guide to review ML you plan on using so that ML is accurate and authentic. The content in their book includes living stories, Native American Poetry, Native American Literature reviews, and other reviews that incorporated Native American characters. Some of the topics and reviews covered include biographies about Native Americans and critical of readings on topics of Thanksgiving, the book series of *Little House On The Prairie*, Missionary Schools, and Reservations. The authors review literature, present the flaws and provide actual events. This book provides ideas on how to find great and not so great Native American books. This book can be a great tool to help teachers and students to rate the books used, and to check on facts, which can be a lesson on questioning content and author's knowledge about their topics. Native authors of *A Broken Flute* corrects the many children and teenage books that have been written about or books with Native Americans context.

Research needs to include using Alaska Native authors and more Alaskan titles that deal with the topic in an authentic and accurate way. Some books to research include: *Anna's Athabscan Summer*, *On Mother's Lap*, *Ka-ha-si and the Loon*, *The Hungry Giant of the Tundra*, *Dance On a Sealskin*, and *Mama Do You Love Me*. These Alaska stories may enhance their own culture and language.

Conclusion

I want to leave you with a thought that has been present at the back of my mind, and has surfaced or resurfaced; I still strongly agree that students should become aware of the diverse world. I further this with the notion that awareness and respect for diversity is key to cooperation and coexistence among cultures in a changing world, but equally important in respecting diversity is embracing one's own uniqueness; respect for one's own culture and language seem to be the building blocks and power within the individual to grow.

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